

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists CRNAs

- Represent nearly 150 years of quality anesthesia
- Safely administer approximately 45 million anesthetics in the US every year
- Represented by 53,000 CRNAs nationwide and over 1,300 here in Georgia
- Are the sole anesthesia providers in nearly 100% of rural hospitals throughout the country
- Practice in every type of clinical setting
- Provide high quality, safe, efficient and cost effective anesthesia care

Mission Statement

The Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists advances patient safety and CRNA practice through advocacy, education, and member engagement.

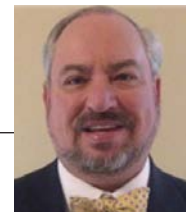
Vision Statement

Certified Registered Nurse Anesthetists in Georgia will be autonomous providers recognized for their full scope of practice and quality patient care and are compensated fairly for their services.

Report from the President

Cherry Blossoms & Other Highlights

by Wallace S. Phillips, MSNA, CRNA



Note: The comments, statements and opinions stated herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the GANA Board of Directors.

I hope everyone is having a wonderful spring and looking forward to those long hot days of summer here in Georgia. The GANA board has been working very diligently for the membership as we are approaching the mid-point of our fiscal year. I have just returned from the Mid-Year Assembly (MYA) and I must say the cherry blossom trees are, without a doubt, the stars of springtime in Washington D.C. As CRNAs and SRNAs descended upon Washington from all parts of the country for MYA, we were greeted with a spectacular view this year as the cherry blossoms trees were at the peak of their bloom. In the recent past we have been to Washington in the spring and it was either very cold and the trees had not started blooming or the weather had been warm and we missed the peak of the season. So this year I had to take the time to go down to the tidal basin to see the trees in all their splendor. This was truly a breathtaking sight. But did you know that Macon, Georgia hosts the International Cherry Blossom Festival and has over 350,000 cherry blossom trees? That is 90 times the number of cherry blossom trees in Washington, D.C., making Macon, Georgia the Cherry Blossom capital of the world.

Okay, enough about cherry trees. The highlight for all of us from Georgia during

this year's Mid-Year Assembly was when Stephen Smith, CRNA was recognized as the 2019 Federal Political Director of the Year. On behalf of the members of Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists, the board of directors nominated Stephen Smith, CRNA for the **Daniel D. Vigness Federal Political Director (FPD) award**. Steve was very deserving of this award for all the years of service, and his dedication to Federal Advocacy. **Congratulations, Steve.**

The hot topic that directed most conversations at this year's MYA was that of the descriptor and name change to "nurse anesthesiologist." CRNAs across the country have begun using the term, and the AANA formally recognized the term as a descriptor in 2018. With usage increasing, members have submitted a bylaws amendment to change the name of the national association to the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists. The GANA board is monitoring and seeking more information as this term is being used and marketed throughout the country.

The GANA board of directors are planning and developing a survey that will be sent out via email to gather the opinion of all GANA members on the name change topic so that we may be better able to gauge interest. The Board currently does not have a stance, except we would like the members to decide and cast an informed vote in the upcoming vote for a bylaws change. The Board members

continued on page 7 >

GANA Officers 2018-2019

Wallace S. Phillips, President
Athens, GA 30606
Phone: 706-424-1633
wphillips@theccaagroup.com

Eddie Thomas
President-Elect
Newnan, GA 30265
Phone: 616-446-3711
bethomas.bet@gmail.com

Barry Cranfill
Immediate Past President
Roswell, GA 30075
Phone: 770-356-2165
bcranfill@sentryanesthesia.com

Alison Herren, Secretary
Lagrange, GA 30241
Phone: 770-3281675
afherren@aol.com

Reed Halterman, Treasurer
Augusta, GA 30907
Phone: 404-454-3401
reed.halterman@gmail.com

GANA Directors 2018-2019

April Culler, Director
Atlanta, GA 30309
Phone: 407-435-0611
aprilculler@gmail.com

Traci Bryan, Director
Cartersville, GA
Phone: 770-789-6220
htbryan@yahoo.com

Wesley Karcher, Director
Woodstock, GA 30189
Phone: 770-833-1422
wkarcher04@yahoo.com

Vito Crespo, Director
Brookhaven, GA 30319
Phone: 404-6100515
vitocrespo1@gmail.com

Representatives for GANA

Steve Smith
Federal Political Director
Alpharetta, GA 30004
Phone: 404-429-8553
slldt@comcast.net

Christy Dunkelberger, Esq.
Legal Counsel
Peachtree City, GA 30269
Phone: 770-841-3980
cadunk@dunkelbergerlaw.com

Monty Veazey, Lobbyist
Tifton, GA 31793
Phone: 229-386-8660
Fax: 229-386-8662
mveazey@gach.org

Garry Brydges
AANA President
gbrydges@aanabod.com

Angela Mund
AANA Region 2 Director
amund@aanabod.com

GANA Website:
www.gana.org

Report from the President-Elect

Our Big Decision

by Eddie Thomas, MSNA, CRNA



Note: The comments, statements and opinions stated herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the GANA Board of Directors.

Spring has sprung here in the South. I am thankful to be emerging from our winter hibernation and enjoying the outdoors again. Another thing that comes with spring in our national association is election season. Yes, it's that time of year again.

The term "nurse anesthesiologist." Yes, this will be probably the biggest topic we will vote on in this year's business meeting. The proposed bylaw amendment to change the name of our national organization to the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists may represent the largest ideology shift in our organization I have seen. This change, if passed, will have far-reaching consequences, both intended and unintended, I'm sure. We as members need to do our due diligence on the topic and render a decision. I ask you to log on to AANA Connect forums or CRNA social media groups and familiarize yourself with the topic. There is also a website, www.nurseanesthesiologistinfo.com, that I suggest you visit to inform yourself. GANA is working on organizing an in-person meet up specifically to discuss the proposed name change. This will take place July 27th in Lake Oconee. Save the date, as there will be more information to follow.

This weekend, I was at my parents' house with my family. As my dad and I were standing around getting the grill going, we were talking about various topics when he asked about work life. During our conversation, the topic of the American Association of Nurse Anesthesiologists name change came up. His response was what most struck me. "Well, why wasn't it always that way? It's so much easier." There was much more discussion delving into the matter, but his core question was what stuck with me. This is from an almost-70 year old retired electrician who, to this day, struggles with the term "anesthetist" when telling his friends what I do. Sometimes it's the simplest solutions that can have the greatest impact and this name change just may be the solution we have been looking for. However, as simple as a name change sounds, it will not be simple. This would be a long-term vision and ideology change that we would be undertaking, and the AANA members need to make the decision whether it is what we desire. We as your GANA board have not taken an official position. I believe this to be the right thing to do. As a board, we represent you as a member-centric organization. You, the members need to vote on this topic and make your voices heard. Once

continued on page 4 >

Evidence and Economics

by Steve Smith, MA, CRNA



After serving as your GANA Federal Political Director (FPD) for over a decade now, it is time to turn over my position to a good friend and colleague who will do us all proud in his position as the new FPD. Wesley Karcher will officially take over my position in October at the Georgia Anesthesia Symposium.

It has truly been an honor for me to serve as Georgia's #1 cheerleader for federal grassroots advocacy on behalf of the GANA membership. I would like to thank the GANA membership's support over the years and to the key contacts who have helped build a strong ongoing relationship with key congressional members in positions of importance.

This year's 2019 Mid-Year Assembly in Washington, D.C. was another year of great advocacy success, as over 1,000 CRNAs and SRNAs from around the country took to Capitol Hill to meet with their legislators and advocate on behalf of pro-CRNA policies. Georgia had 37 CRNAs and SRNAs who attended the meeting. We were able to spend one full day visiting the offices of our 14 US representatives and 2 US senators. I would like to give a special thanks to all of those that attended, but especially to CRNA Wesley Karcher and SRNAs from Augusta University, Will Howell and Jordan Barnes for helping to keep me organized and on task.

Following a successful Capitol Hill Rally the morning of Tuesday, April 9th, we met with members of Congress and

"We let them know that CRNAs offer the most cost-effective model of anesthesia delivery, are the sole providers in nearly 100% of rural hospitals, are less costly to train than anesthesiologists by about 85%, and we advocated for the ability to work to the fullest extent of our education and training!"

their staffs to talk about the important role that CRNAs play in the healthcare system. During the visits, we stressed the need for Congress to act on issues important to CRNAs, including legislation to deal with Medicare Administrative Contractors, rural healthcare, supporting full practice authority in the VHA, Title VIII nursing workforce funding and CRNAs' role in helping with the opioid crisis. Our major theme we delivered to our legislators was "Evidence and Economics: CRNA Value in Healthcare!" We let them know that CRNAs offer the most cost-effective model of anesthesia delivery, are the sole providers in nearly 100% of rural hospitals, are less costly to train than anesthesiologists by about 85%, and we advocated for the ability to work to the fullest extent of our education and training!

Augusta student Elizabeth Gay and I had the wonderful opportunity to participate in the AANA Mid-Year Assembly student mentorship program. This is a program designed to provide a positive, welcoming, motivational and educational experience to student leaders through the mentorship of experienced CRNA leaders. Elizabeth was paired up with immediate past president of the AANA, Bruce Weiner and I was paired up with SRNA Crystal Grayson from the University of Alabama at Birmingham. The primary goal of the program is to mentor and produce future AANA leaders. I have no doubt that Elizabeth and Crystal will be leaders in our professional organization one day.

This year's CRNA-PAC event, a Kentucky Derby themed reception held at District Winery, helped raise important resources to help with ongoing lobbying efforts. The CRNAs from Georgia along with SRNA Levi Kemper, who was sponsored by Wesley Karcher, participated in a great night of fun that helped increase the funds for the AANA CRNA-PAC.

continued on page 18 >

GANA News

by Sheryl Reyes, MPH, MSMIS



GANA Nominating Committee:

Seeking Candidates for the 2019-2020 Ballot:

The Nominating Committee is seeking candidates to run for the following GANA leadership positions:

- President-elect
- Secretary
- Treasurer, and
- Two (2) Directors

Please complete the form TO BE CONSIDERED.

- Self-nomination, or
- Nomination of a GANA member.

If you would like to nominate multiple GANA members you must submit a separate form each time. Submitting the form does not guarantee you/or the person you nominated to be placed on the ballot. You are only submitting interest to be considered.

You will hear from GANA and/or the members of the Nominating Committee of your status sometime in July or August 2019. The form will close on Monday, July 1, 2019.

GANA Strategic Planning:

Following a recommendation from the State Organizational Development Committee (SODC), the AANA Board of Directors approved the implementation of a 2-year pilot program to offer association management services for up to five state association. GANA is one of the five states participating in the program. As a participant, GANA benefited from a strategic planning session on March 16, 2019 facilitated by a governance consultant and sponsored by AANA. Strategic planning is important because it provides a sense of direction or roadmap for accomplishing the association's goals.

As a result from the session, a proposed strategic plan has been drafted highlighting the organization's priorities for the next 3-5 years. The GANA Board and committee members are currently reviewing the plan so that it can be shared with membership for input and ultimately approved by the GANA Board. For more information, please contact sreyes@aana.com.

GANA Board Meeting:

The last GANA Board meeting was held at Emory University on March 30, 2019. All Board meeting minutes can be found on the member side of the GANA website. Board meetings are open to all members. The next GANA Board Meeting will be held in conjunction with the July Regional Meeting (more information to come!) If you are interested in attending any of the Board meetings, please contact sreyes@aana.com. ▲

FROM PAGE 2

Our Big Decision

those votes are cast, then we as an organization can move forward TOGETHER. I know how I will vote and I ask that you do your research and make your opinion heard.

This year we have an amazing pool of people who feel called to serve the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists. Each and every candidate on the list has shown to be dedicated and driven for the advancement of our great profession. I hope you took the time to learn a little about the candidates and that you voted. All of the candidates hold various opinions on hot topics in our association right now: the NBCRNA, nurse anesthesiologist, etc. However, we need to remember this is a member-driven trade organization. We as members steer this organization by who we vote for. Last year only about 12% of the CRNAs in Georgia voted. I hope this year we pushed that number much higher.

Lastly, I would like to congratulate and support our fellow GANA member Wesley Karcher and current GANA board member. He has officially filed to run for the Georgia House of Representatives, serving District 20. Wes is going to need all of our support financially and with campaign volunteers. In the near future you can find out more information at www.karcherforhouse.com.

Bethomas.bet@gmail.com
(616) 446-3711 ▲



CRNAs Wesley Karcher and Eddie Thomas

Healthcare – The Main Issue

by Monty Veazey



With the 2019 legislative session behind us, I want to update you on what happened and more importantly, what didn't happen this session.

The 2019 legislative session was "gavel-in" on January 14, and ran until April 2. Building up to the opening, all the buzz was signaling this to be the year of major healthcare changes. Healthcare was in fact the main issue under the gold dome largely due to the rewrite of Certificate of Need, which has little impact on CRNAs. However, there were over 40 healthcare bills introduced that we monitored.

Balance billing was set to be passed this session, but it fell short along with the other bills we monitored. With all the focus on healthcare this session, only a few bills made it to the Governor's desk.

Looking forward, there are a couple of Healthcare Study Committees to make note of, as we will be following and testifying –

HR 261 by Dr. Mark Newton of Augusta would create a study committee on evaluating and simplifying physician oversight of mid-level providers.

This committee would evaluate current state laws, as well as propose legislation, relating to physicians' oversight of physician assistants and advanced practice registered nurses to determine how physicians' oversight could be simplified and streamlined to navigate the practice environment.

HR 590 would create the House Study Committee on Georgia's barriers to access adequate healthcare

HR 644 creates House Study Committee on healthcare reimbursement would look at current system of reimbursement to providers and what changes should be made.

With all the interest of legislators in healthcare, it will keep our team busy over the summer and fall as these committees will issue their findings by December 31, 2019.

While the legislative session has only ended two weeks ago, we are getting many requests for fundraisers, some of which we should plan to give and attend. With it being a non-election year, we will keep this minimal. I would ask each of you to make a contribution to the PAC fund so we may have a voice at the Capitol. ▲

Below is a list of the bills that passed and were signed by the Governor on April 28:

- HB 186 – Certificate of Need (CON) rewrite
- HB 321 – Medicaid financing program extended to 2024
- HB 63 – Insurance; health benefit plans, step therapy protocols
- HB 287 – Income tax; physicians serving rural communities, preceptor tax credit
- SB 16 – "Interstate Medical Licensure Compact Act"
- SB 168 – Nurses change certain definitions, revise

Need Malpractice Insurance?

Contact AANA Insurance Services at 1-800-343-1368
or obtain insurance information from the
AANA website.

Augusta University Class of 2020 Student Report

by Will Howell, SRNA



Hello everyone! I would like to say "Happy Spring" on behalf of the DNP Nursing Anesthesia Class of 2020 at Augusta University. My name is Will Howell and I am the Class of 2020 representative to the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists. We are currently finishing our fourth semester and at the end of our didactic work. In May 2019, we will begin our clinical rotations all across Georgia. The class is excited to get to our respective clinical sites and complete the second half of the three-year long program. This spring semester has been nothing short of busy. We have worked especially hard in the lab this semester. We had the regional wizard, Eddie Thomas, come to campus for a full day of hands-on ultrasound technique and peripheral nerve blocks. We also delved into intensive lectures on these topics. We have worked diligently with our Augusta University faculty members learning central line, epidural, and spinal techniques as well as working in the cadaver lab with the ultrasound. In addition, we have continued working in our world-class simulation center to . Our simulation and hands on learning experience is unparalleled and will serve us well as we transition to the clinical setting.

The Class of 2020 attended Capitol Day in Atlanta back in January. We met with our state legislators and learned more about the state political process. We had the opportunity to lobby with our professors and other CRNAs from across Georgia. We are looking forward to next year's Capitol Day and hope that more CRNAs will come and lobby with us. The take away that we learned from Capitol Day is that democracy is not a spectator sport. We understand the importance of lobbying and being involved in the process. It is imperative that as the future leaders, we become engaged and strive for the advancement of our patients and our profession. We also had 26 of our 30 class members attend the AANA Mid-Year Assembly in Washington, D.C. Please check out my classmate's article on Mid-Year Assembly, it is a must read.

Another highlight of the semester is that the AU Class of 2020 had a strong student presence at the GANA Strategic Planning Meeting in March. We enjoyed being involved in planning for the coming years and are thankful to be members of an organization that appreciates students' perspectives. We are happy to lend our voice, and we are equally excited about the direction of our organization.

GANA Calendar 2019

July 27, 2019

GANA Regional Meeting
Reynolds, Lake Oconee

August 9-13, 2019

AANA Annual Congress – Chicago, IL

August 24, 2019

GANA Board Meeting – Augusta University

October 4-6, 2019

GANA Annual Meeting – Atlanta, GA

For more information on GANA events, please visit the calendar page on the GANA website.

The Class of 2020 would also like to extend a warm welcome to our Class of 2021 DNP Nursing Anesthesia colleagues. Welcome to the SRNA community! We hope that your first semester went well and wish you luck in your upcoming semester. Lastly, our class can't wait for the 2019 Georgia Anesthesia Symposium (GAS) in Atlanta this October. We hope to see all of our friends from across the state there, and we hope to meet plenty new friends as well. As students we love to meet new SRNAs and CRNAs, so plan to come! ▲



*Augusta University SRNAs at
GANA Capitol Week in January*

FROM THE COVER

Cherry Blossoms & Other Highlights

have received many communications on this topic from the membership – there are many in favor and many opposed to any changes in the use of the descriptor and to the name change. We are planning to collect this data so that we may have the information for a discussion and update at our next regional meeting which will be held at the Ritz-Carlton at Lake Oconee in July. The Committee for Proper Recognition for CRNAs (CPRC) has more information on the bylaws amendment on the website, www.nurseanesthesiologistinfo.com.

As you may remember, Georgia is one of the five states participating in a pilot program where the AANA provides our state's association management services. The AANA provided a consultant for GANA to develop its strategic plan for 2019-2022 as part of that program. The GANA Board and many CRNAs and SRNAs met in Atlanta on March 16th for a strategic planning session with the consultant to work on this important part of association management and leadership. It proved to be a very productive day and I would like to thank all of the CRNAs and SRNAs that participated in this process. We were able to identify many areas in need of updates, and we identified our overall strategies and goals that we will be implementing over the next three years.

As a final note, I would like to thank all GANA/AANA members who participated in the AANA Board of Directors election process. Voting was open until May 21, 2019. This is where member engagement begins. ▲



**Go to www.gana.org,
scroll down and click on
the “Social Media” button
and then “Like Us” on
Facebook!**

What's In a Name? vs. Return on Investment!

By Barry Cranfill, MHS, MBA, FAAPM, CRNA



Note: The comments, statements and opinions stated herein are solely those of the author and do not necessarily reflect the position of the GANA Board of Directors.

“What's in a name? That which we call a rose, By any other name would smell as sweet.” (Shakespeare, Romeo and Juliet : II,ii,1-2). Since Shakespeare wrote these words in the 1590s, folks have been quoting these lines when making the point that the names of things do not really affect or determine what they are. And it's true! Imagine, would a rose smell any different if the formers of our language had decided to name the rose “skunk?” Would an outhouse smell or look better if we called it the “Taj Mahal”? Of course not.

Things and people are what they are, regardless of the moniker assigned to them. CRNAs are no different. We are who we are, regardless of what we want to call ourselves or what others want to call us. Many would have you believe differently. But the truth is, that it really doesn't matter. So as you consider the upcoming discussions regarding the Association name change and the AANA position on the use of the title nurse anesthesiologist ... remember, it's not the name that makes us who we are. It's what we do.

Additionally, as you consider this issue, please be intellectually honest regarding the unintended consequences. An association name change and eventual title change will be a direct frontal assault on the American Society of Anesthesiologist (ASA). History and wise Generals tell us that a direct frontal assault against superior force (in numbers, resources and influence) in a fortified defensive position is disaster. It becomes a war of attrition and no one really wins because of the cost on both sides.

Now one may be asking, why is the State Reimbursement Specialist (SRS) talking about titles and names? Good question! Allow me to elaborate.

While we are self-flagellating, in-fighting, bickering, pounding our chests, making our points, decrying the opposition, bolstering our positions, arguing our cases, fear mongering and pushing our agendas regarding the association name change bylaw and the use of the title nurse anesthesiologist, no one is paying attention to how CRNAs are being paid by the commercial payors across the country.

continued on page 13 >

LOOKING BACK ...

February 16 • GANA Regional Meeting
at the Loft at Due South in Peachtree City



*Dusty Devine Johnson, Danielle Moore
and Barry Cranfill*



*Alexis, Erin, Annette,
Leah and Terrica Harris*



Erin, Leah and Krissie



*Wally Phillips, Barry Cranfill, Jo Sineath,
Eddie Thomas, Alison Herren and
Sarah Phillips*

Georgia Rural Health Association's Rural Health Day
at the Capitol on February 27, 2019



Steve Smith and Eddie Thomas



Lieutenant Governor Geoff Duncan and Eddie Thomas

March at Brenau University – Becoming a CRNA



*Steve Smith CRNA, Will Howell SRNA from AU
and Kaitlyn Ogden SRNA from Emory*



A Message from Wesley Karcher

So, it seems surreal to me, but as of the date I am writing this article (April 15, 2019), I have officially filed my Declaration of Intent to run for the open state representative seat in District 20 here in Georgia for 2020.

It has always been a dream of mine to run (and hopefully win) a seat in either the state or national government. After much soul searching, I have come to the decision that the time is right for me to run. With our current state representative moving on to campaigning for the State Senate, there is an open House seat to fill. Being that it is in an open seat, I imagine there will be 3-4 other contenders in the race. So it will be by no means easy to win this seat, but I feel like I can bring a lot to the table.

Georgia is 7th from the bottom in healthcare outcomes currently. My background in healthcare sets me up to be a strong voice for healthcare reform, especially for our rural communities. Nursing has been the "most trusted profession" many years running, and I hope that will translate into strong trust from the voters of District 20.

I'm hopeful that I can count on the full support of my fellow Georgia CRNAs, SRNAs and all of the APRNs and RNs out there. I'll not only need funds to pull this campaign off, but VOLUNTEERS will be crucial in order to get the word out. The primary election in May 2020 seems like a long way off but it will be here before we know it. There's a lot of fundraising, campaign planning, and talking to be done before that date gets here.

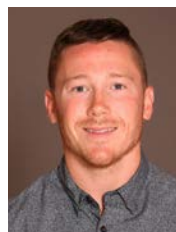
I will keep everyone updated as the campaign progresses throughout this year and next. I hope I can make all of my CRNA colleagues proud. Let's all work together to get a CRNA in the Georgia General Assembly in 2020!

Programs Update – GAS2019

We hope to see everyone in Atlanta for the **Georgia Anesthesia Symposium 2019, October 4-6** at the Westin Buckhead Atlanta. We have a great slate of speakers from around the country with a total of 16.00 Class A CE credits approved by the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists, with up to 1.50 CE Credits in pharmacology/therapeutics. **Visit GANA.org for registration.**

We also have a special offer through the AANA. For an additional \$175 (regular price \$299), you can purchase the CPC modules as an added benefit for attending their GAS 2019. Modules will be purchased directly from the AANA Learn site, with a special promo code through GANA. Click on Learn More from GAS2019 on GANA.org for additional information.

Reed Halterman & Leslie Jeter
Programs Committee Co-Chairs



Emory University Student Report

by Shawn Biddle, SRNA

This summer semester marks one year of clinical training for our Emory University DNP Nurse Anesthesia Class of 2020. We have come such a long way from our humble beginnings this time last year, where our stress mainly originated from learning our induction sequence and performing anesthesia machine checks to now preparing care plans for adult and pediatric cardiothoracic cases. While the Class of 2020 is starting to get our sea legs under us, the Junior Class of 2021 will begin putting their didactic knowledge and simulation training to the test as they enter the operating room starting this summer semester.

The Class of 2020 reached a major milestone this spring semester by successfully defending their DNP project proposals. This was no easy task, as students were busy with didactic classroom days, simulations, and attending clinical three days a week. As the summer semester begins, we will be extending our time in the operating room as well as preparing to implement our DNP projects.

Lastly, the Class of 2020 would like to give a warm thank you to all of our very generous preceptors. Thank you for your ever-enduring patience as you help shape us into becoming confident, passionate, and competent nurse anesthetists. ▲



Brian Peebles, Crystal Grayson, Robert Sosebee, Oliver Mba, Stacie Studstill, Libby Novak, Congresswoman Lucy McBath's Legislative Aide Allison Blankenship, Steve Smith and Levi Kemper at the AANA MYA



2019 MYA and the Students' Perspective

by Jordan Barnes, SRNA

From the blooming of the cherry blossom trees to the District's many monuments, 26 Augusta University Doctorate of Nursing Practice in Nursing Anesthesia students were able to enjoy spring's arrival while advocating for their future profession in Washington, D.C. Students had an impactful experience at the 2019 Mid-Year Assembly learning about the importance of being advocates for their future profession while meeting with their legislators alongside CRNAs and SRNAs from across the United States.

Students felt their time in D.C. was truly worthwhile. GANA Class Representative Will Howell, enjoyed being on Capitol Hill taking advantage of the legislative meetings and talking policy. He and fellow FPD committee member and classmate Jordan Barnes, helped prepare Augusta University students for their legislative meetings. Students spent the first three days of their time in D.C. learning how to successfully advocate and meet with legislators. On Tuesday, April 9th, students went to the Capitol Hill Rally before going to their individual state legislative visits. Katherine Whitfield, Augusta University second-year SRNA, was able to advocate alongside her parents, who are both CRNAs. Katherine and

her parents, Ray and Rhonda Whitfield, met with Charlotte Kaye, legislative correspondent for David Perdue, discussing how CRNAs provide safe, quality, cost-effective anesthetic care. Elizabeth Gay, second-year AU SRNA participated in the Student Mentorship Program as a mentee to Dr. Bruce Weiner, 2017-2018 AANA President. Elizabeth felt honored to meet and be mentored by Dr. Weiner as well as many other AANA and GANA leaders, learning the history and strategic planning behind the advancement of the nursing anesthesia profession.

While students spent most of their time learning about how to successfully advocate, they were also able to explore

Washington, D.C. Students were able to visit the Cherry Blossom Festival to see more cherry blossoms than they could count, ride a scooter around the National Mall, visit Arlington National Cemetery and witness the Changing of the Guard, and visit the countless D.C. museums. Paul Brangers, SRNA at Augusta University, took in all the District had to offer touring the White House with a fellow SRNA and Army Nurse Corps Veterans. Washington D.C. and the 2019 Mid-Year Assembly was an experience that the students of Augusta University will likely never forget.



Participants in the AANA MYA Student Mentorship Program: Steve Smith, SRNA Crystal Grayson (UAB), Past AANA President Bruce Weiner and SRNA Elizabeth Gay (Augusta University)



Keith Graves, Katherine, Ray and Rhonda Whitfield, Congressman Doug Collin's Legislative Assistant Jacob Rogers, Ann Marie Sammon, Kayla Morgan and Steve Smith

Steve Smith Receives 2019 Daniel F. Vigness Federal Political Director of the Year Award

Steve Smith, the Georgia Federal Political Director, received the 2019 Daniel F. Vigness Federal Political Director of the Year Award from the American Association of Nurse Anesthetists (AANA) during the AANA's Mid-Year Assembly held in Washington, D.C. Steve is the 18th recipient of the award.

The Daniel D. Vigness Federal Political Director of the Year Award was established in 2001 by the AANA Board of Directors to acknowledge the CRNA who makes the greatest strides in advancing the AANA's federal healthcare agenda through grassroots political activities as a Federal Political Director. Daniel D. Vigness, MS, CRNA, was the first recipient of the Federal Political Director of the Year Award. A CRNA for nearly 30 years and a South Dakota native, Vigness lost his battle with cancer in 2013.

For more than a decade Steve has led the legislative efforts for the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists (GANA), on the state and federal level. Steve's approach to advocacy has helped to ensure access to safe anesthesia care by tirelessly lobbying the Georgia legislature and engaging the CRNAs and nurse anesthesia students in his state to do the same.

"I appreciate the nomination and selection for the Daniel Vigness award; this is truly an honor to be recognized in this manner by my peers," said Steve. "Advocating for the profession of nurse anesthesia is directly tied to the wonderful patients and families we care for each day. I

could not have accomplished all that we have without the dedicated CRNAs and SRNAs across the state of Georgia."

Steve is currently the chief operating officer and co-owner of Georgia Anesthesia LLC, an all-CRNA, office-based practice in the greater Atlanta area, where they provide anesthesia for 15 healthcare practices. In addition, he is a frequent lecturer on the business of anesthesia, political advocacy, for the diversity informational sessions and mentor to nurse anesthesia students. He is also very proud of his group serving as an all-CRNA orthopedic rural site for the SRNAs from the Emory nurse anesthesia program.

Steve earned his bachelor's degree in nursing from the University of Oklahoma. He received his master's degree in biology from the University of Missouri in Kansas City and a diploma in nurse anesthesia from Truman Medical Center School of Nurse Anesthesia in Kansas City. ▲



Nominations for the 2019 Rosalie McDonald Award Now Being Accepted

GANA is seeking nominations for a CRNA to receive the 2019 Rosalie McDonald Award. Please nominate a worthy CRNA for this prestigious award. All nominations must be submitted by August 5th to the GANA office. Nominations should be prepared in narrative format and submitted by email to: gana@aana.com

Rosalie McDonald spearheaded the GANA in 1938. She was the first GANA President, and the 6th AANA President. GANA provides an annual award to an outstanding CRNA who demonstrates leadership and professionalism in nurse anesthesia practice. Be proud of your profession. Honor a fellow CRNA by nominating him or her for their contributions to our profession. The honoree will be presented with the award during the GANA's Georgia Anesthesia Symposium, October 4-6, in Atlanta, Georgia.



AANA President Garry Brydges and GANA FPD Steve Smith



Emory University

Nell Hodgkins Woodruff School of Nursing

Nurse Anesthesia Program Report



By Kelly Wiltse Nicely, PhD, CRNA and Erica Moore, DNP, CRNA

The Emory Nurse Anesthesia DNP Program has had an eventful and exciting year! We welcomed three new CRNA faculty into our fold, including Dr. Erica Moore, DNP, CRNA as Assistant Program Director. Dr. Moore joined Emory as teaching faculty and quickly demonstrated exceptional skill in the classroom and in administrative responsibilities. In addition, Dr. Leslie Jeter, DNP, CRNA and Katie Cole, MSN, CRNA have joined our team as teaching faculty.

In August, 15 new students will be joining the Emory family, beginning their journey through nurse anesthesia doctoral studies. They join 20 students already at Emory who comprise the first and second cohorts of the program. In order to provide the best possible training and education, we have worked diligently to expand our clinical offerings. We offer our most sincere thanks and appreciation to all of our clinical partners and preceptors for creating such a rich and positive clinical environment for students to grow and refine their skills!

Additional highlights and accomplishments of our team include:

- Emory University served as the host to the Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program in April 2018 and participated in the Spring 2019 Diversity in Nurse Anesthesia Mentorship Program

- Shawn Biddle (Class of 2020) received a scholarship from the Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists (GANA)
- Emory faculty were awarded funding beginning July 2018 from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) Nurse Anesthesia Traineeship Grant
- Emory faculty were awarded funding from the Woodruff Fund to examine the CRNA Workforce in Georgia
- Dr. Kelly Wiltse Nicely (Program Director) was awarded the inaugural Provost Distinguished Teaching Award for Excellence in Graduate and Professional Education

Any inquiries regarding the program can be directed to crnaquestions@emory.edu. To stay up to date on the daily activities of Emory's Nurse Anesthesia DNP Program, follow the program on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram:

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/EmoryCRNA/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/EmoryCRNA>

Instagram: @emorycrna or [Instagram.com/emorycrna](https://www.instagram.com/emorycrna)

Emory SRNAs attend GANA Capitol Week • January 22-24, 2019



The Emory SRNAs with State Representative Jasmine Cook



Emory SRNAs and Professor Dr. Erica Moore with Senator Renee Unterman

What's In a Name?

Let's be honest folks. We love to provide care for our patients. We want to be the best for them and for our profession. But at the end of the day, if we aren't being paid market rates for our exemplary services, does it really matter what we call ourselves or what others call us? I cannot buy puppy chow for my Boykin Spaniels with good intentions or recognition! Publix and Kroger prefer dollars. As my Momma used to say, "Call me whatever you want, just don't call me late for dinner!" So please, let's try to refocus our energy on what DOES make a difference.

The AANA and CRNAs like to talk about Medicare and reimbursement. We waste an abysmal amount of time worrying and wringing our hands about this Federal payor that, although a large percentage of our payor mix, we can do little to nothing about. The rates are determined by government bureaucrats and the payments are ridiculously low and all the complaining and griping and negotiating will not change the fact that the federal government is only going to pay us 80% of about \$22/unit! On a 10 unit cholecystectomy, that equates to \$176 payment from Medicare. That \$176 has to cover not only the cost of the provider(s), but the cost of everything associated with providing the service (all the business overhead and billing expenses). With Medicaid, the number is even worse: \$15.85/unit!

On the other hand, we CRNAs do provide our expert care to patients that have commercial insurance! According to the annual ASA Survey Results for Commercial Fees Paid, the national average conversion factor (CF) pays \$76.32/unit and in Georgia, the average CF is \$75.49/unit. (ASA Monitor, October 2018). So in Georgia, the average commercial payor pays 343% more per case than Medicare and 476% more than Medicaid. Yet CRNAs and the AANA continuously choose to spend the vast majority of their professional "capital" (time, energy, influence and money) on governmental payor issues or other boondoggles! With the payment scale tilted so obviously toward commercial payors (you have to do approximately FOUR Medicare or Medicaid cases to equal the value of

ONE commercial case), why aren't we spending more professional capital on this most important issue?

Now for those of you that are employed CRNAs, paid a specific rate for your time and service, you may ask, "Why should I care? The money doesn't come to me!" Let me explain how this works. If the person that signs the FRONT of your check makes less money, I can assure you it will trickle down to the person that signs the BACK of the check. If that same person makes more money for your services, there is a possibility that he or she will share that wealth with you as his or her employee. Therefore, it is in your best interest to help your employer maximize the reimbursement received from the commercial payors and to help your employer understand how CRNAs can have an enormous impact to the bottom line if the practice has properly negotiated commercial contracts for QZ (non-medically directed) CRNA services.

Over the years, as I have negotiated face to face with commercial insurers in Georgia, I have found one thing to be true. They do not care what we call ourselves. They only care that we are providing their insured members with the best care at the best value. Negotiating the types of rates listed above is not an easy task. It requires that your practice have a significant market share, and it takes years of work, patience and data mining to show how your anesthesia is exceeding expectations and is therefore worthy of higher rates.

Unlike a few states, where select insurers refuse to directly reimburse CRNAs or fail to reimburse QZ CRNAs at market rates, in Georgia, we are fortunate to have commercial insurers that readily reimburse CRNAs for service. Yet many practices in Georgia (physician and CRNA practices alike) do not spend the time and energy that is required to maintain market rates for their professional anesthesia services with commercial payors. Or worse yet, some practices simply expect their contracted billing service vendor to do it for them, thus

delegating this most important of tasks to an agent that will have little motivation (since the billing company will only get 5-10% of the increase) to put forth the effort required.

Therefore, if you are a practice owner or manager or a hospital employed CRNA and the hospital bills for your services, take a moment and review all of the current commercial contracts associated with your practice. Benchmark the rates with the ASA Survey Results for Commercial Fees Paid and see where your practice stands in comparison. If your reimbursement is falling short, work to renegotiate the rates using the data you have for your practice and the benchmarking data. Show the commercial insurers your worth and start the long and arduous journey to get your rates up to par! If you are an employed CRNA with a group, take the time to talk with your employer and ask about QZ billing for your services. Explain how, if the practice's commercial managed care contracts have been negotiated properly to allow for it, QZ billing can reduce costs, increase efficiency and increase the bottom line. If the physicians have failed to negotiate proper commercial managed care contracts that do not penalize or deny QZ services, ask them to reconsider the possibility and renegotiate the terms with the payors so that they can reap the financial benefits associated with QZ billing and operations.

Spend your professional capital wisely. Don't waste your resources on things that do not produce a measurable and absolute return on investment. A few minutes reviewing your commercial contracts will pay handsomely compared to any endless hours spent trying to convince someone to recognize a new name!

Finally, should you need any assistance with payors in Georgia, please contact me directly or through the GANA. I am always here to help our members! ▲

Looking Forward to 2019

by Alison Herren, CRNA



"Spring is the time of plans and projects."— Leo Tolstoy

Indeed, this quote is true for GANA and we have been quite busy. We are excited for all the activity with the Public Relations Committee this year.

First, the PR committee and the GANA board would like to welcome Traci Bryan, CRNA to one of the director positions. Traci has been a GANA board member in the past and we welcome her return!

Next, we had CRNA week in January. GANA presence was heavy at the Capitol during CRNA week. We want to thank all CRNAs and SRNAs who took time off work and school to travel to the Capitol to represent our profession. On March 16th, GANA had a strategic planning meeting where we made plans for the future and created strategies for achievement. In the future, the Board would like the Public Relations Committee to start hosting events that are family friendly "outings". We would like volunteers in the community to help plan, host, or suggest ideas for these future events. Examples include a movie on a lawn, a festival, or other social events for members and their families. If you have suggestions for social events in your area, please email the PR Committee.

On March 30, 2019, GANA held a board meeting at Emory University. We would like to express our thanks to the CRNAs and SRNAs who attended this meeting. We received great suggestions for future meeting topics and a lot of interest in government relations from our Emory SRNAs.

GANA's PR committee has been holding area meetings in different regions of the state for a few years with

great success. We plan to continue these "regional" area meetings in order to reach our members and encourage more involvement with GANA and the board members. The more involved our members are, the more effective GANA will be for you!

We had our last regional area meeting in Peachtree City on February 16, 2019 at The Loft at Due South. This was an excellent venue and our speaker, Dana Potts, lectured about "Financial Self-Esteem." Dana was a wonderful speaker and allowed time for individual questions and consults at the end of his lecture. We hope everyone enjoyed the meeting. Thank you to those members who participated and attended the event.

Our next regional area meeting will be held July 27, 2019 at Lake Oconee, GA. The meeting will be at the Ritz-Carlton Reynolds in the Tupelo ballroom with guest speaker Angela Mund, DNP, CRNA, Region 2 Director. Dr. Mund will be speaking on the much-debated topic of our CRNA proposed name change. Another guest appearance via teleconference will be Joe Rodriguez, who is a leading figure in the "nurse anesthesiologist" movement. This will be an excellent meeting at a wonderful venue. Please bring your professional thoughts and opinions to the meeting in order for your voice to be heard. You do not want to miss this meeting!

As always, we welcome ideas, suggestions, questions, comments, and concerns. We have a busy year planned and we want OUR members participating. If you are interested in volunteering or have suggestions, feel free to email us at afterren@aol.com or Sarah Phillips at sarah8888@hotmail.com. ▲



CRNA Holly Dilworth with a close family friend, Senator John Wilkinson at GANA Capitol Week in January



Levi Kemper, Zach Breaux, Will Howell, Wesley Karcher, Steve Smith and Eddie Thomas at the AANA MYA



Michael Lockley, Wesley Karcher, Eddie Thomas, Allyson Wilson, Senator David Perdue's Legislative Assistant Charlotte Kaye, Katherine Whitfield, Donovan Peace, Ann Marie Sammon and Ray and Rhonda Whitfield at the AANA MYA

AANA Mid-Year Assembly

April 6-10 • Washington DC



Great visit with Congressman Allen from CRNA Wesley Karcher and 12 of the Augusta University SRNAs who were all constituents



Libby Novak, Oliver Mba, Kurt Wahnschaff, Jade Deason, Crystal Grayson, Congressman David Scott's Legislative Assistant Ijeoma Egekeze, Paul Brangers and Steve Smith



Oliver Mba, Crystal Grayson, Bonnie Bell, April Culler, Eddie Thomas, Elizabeth Gay, Simrin Pratheja and Wesley Karcher at John Lewis' office



Kurt Wahnschaff, Kayla Morgan, Congressman Drew Ferguson's Legislative Assistant Mary Dee Beal, Eddie Thomas and Ann Marie Sammon



Zach Breaux, Jordan Barnes, Congressman Hice, Ashley Pilcher, Simrin Pratheja, Lindsay Elder, Wally Phillips and Jo Sineath



April Culler, Tara Thomas, Jo Sineath, Lisa Smith, Wesley Karcher, Steve Smith, Levi Kemper, Eddie Thomas and Janice Izlar attending the AANA CRNA-PAC event "A Night at the Kentucky Derby"

Augusta University Nurse Anesthesia Program

Graduated in December 2018



*Bilal Hussien, Jeremy Jones, Ben Hanner,
Kevin Bragg, Aaron Conner, Mehul Patel*



*Mehul Patel, Mallory Harris,
Brigitte Bennett, Lisa Catudal,
Allie Nelson, Kevin Bragg*



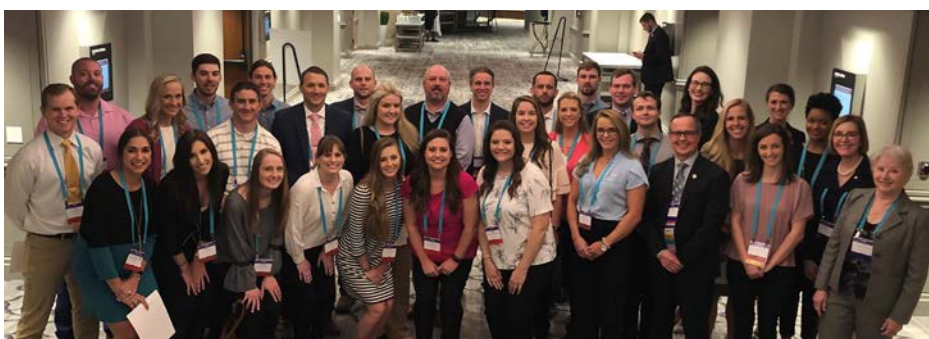
*Caitlin Thompson, Jessie Hall, Caroline
Overgaard, Abbey Meyer, Whitney Walls,
Rachel Williams, Jennifer Palombo,
Samantha Pollock*

More from the AANA Mid-Year Assembly

April 6-10 • Washington DC



*SRNA Crystal Grayson from
UAB, April Culler and Jo Sineath*



Georgia CRNAs and SRNAs attending MYA



*Zach Breaux, Will Howell, Levi Kemper, Steve Smith, Wesley Karcher,
Senator Johnny Isakson's Legislative Assistant Gus Youmans,
Eddie Thomas and Wally Phillips*



*Will Howell, Bonnie Bell, Simrin Pratheja, Wesley Karcher
and Congressman Barry Loudermilk's
Legislative Assistant Eric Johnson*

AANA 2019
Annual Congress ■ August 9-13, 2019 ■ Chicago, IL



GAS 2019

Georgia Anesthesia Symposium

October 4 - 6

Join GANA in ATLANTA

EDUCATE + ENGAGE + EMPOWER

REGISTRATION OPEN - GRAB YOUR DISCOUNTED TUITION RATE

Quality Program by a Non-Profit Educational Provider

GANA.org/gas-2019

**Register by September 1, 2019
to enjoy discounted tuition rates:**

GANA Member - \$525

Non Member - \$600

SRNA - \$200

Daily rates available

**Discounted Lodging at
The Westin Buckhead Atlanta**
Starting at \$159 + taxes

Conference Coordinator:

Laura Moritz

Laura@AssociationMeetingPlanners.com



GANA
Supporting Members • Protecting Patients

Georgia Association
of Nurse Anesthetists

Legislative Update

by Maegan Brass, CRNA



On Thursday, April 25th, Georgia Governor Brian Kemp, Lt. Governor Geoff Duncan, and many other legislators came to the Cancer Treatment Centers of America (CTCA) in Newnan to sign HB 186 and six other healthcare bills, including the Patient's First Act and Step Therapy bills into law. HB 186 allows CTCA to treat more in-state patients, allows the hospital to apply to add more beds, and ends a nearly decade long

battle between CTCA and Georgia's nonprofit hospitals. I had the pleasure of being able to take Emory SRNA Sarah Green and introduce her to many of our state legislators. I hope that by exposing her to the importance of politics and those crucial relationships, she will take that with her into her professional practice.

From Sarah Green, SRNA

During my rotation at CTCA, I had the incredible opportunity to meet our Governor and many of our state legislators who visited the hospital to sign several bills directly impacting our patients here in Georgia. Seeing firsthand the impact that these bills had and will continue to have on the patients that we serve and their families was truly amazing. The reason that we all chose this profession was to provide the best care for our patients, and this experience demonstrated to me that this is accomplished not only in the OR, but also in the political arena. Thank you so much to my preceptor, Maegan Brass, who introduced me to the Governor and especially to her husband, Georgia Senator Matt Brass, who has been fighting for our patients in the Senate for the last three years and who made this bill possible!

FROM PAGE 3

Evidence & Economics

On another note, it was an honor for me to receive the 18th annual Daniel D. Vigness Federal Political Director Award during the AANA Mid-Year Assembly. I would like to give a very special thanks to the GANA board, President Wally Phillips for nominating me, and my mentor for 20 years now and very good friend Past AANA President Janice Izlar for her heartfelt nomination letter. Janice was the second recipient of this award.

As this will be my last article as your GANA FPD, I would like to leave you with the following words by Winston Churchill, "Success consists of going from failure to failure without loss of enthusiasm." In some ways this would describe our (the GANA and AANA) efforts for full practice authority and reimbursement, over the past 150 years. I say never give up the fight, we must remain enthusiastic, energized, stay the course and not give up our right to practice to our full scope so all patients will have access to the care they deserve. ▲

At the Cancer Treatment Centers of America in Newnan, Georgia • April 25, 2019



Emory SRNA Sarah Green with Governor Brian Kemp and Maegan Brass, CRNA



Senator Matt Brass with his wife, Maegan Brass, CRNA



Emory SRNA Sarah Green with Lt. Gov. Geoff Duncan and Maegan Brass, CRNA



Emory SRNA Sarah Green with Senator Kay Kirkpatrick

**[www.aana.com/
peerassist.aspx](http://www.aana.com/peerassist.aspx)**

**Helpline
Peer Assistance
800.654.5167**

**Anesthetists in
Recovery (AIR)
215.635.0183**

GANA Capitol Week

January 22-24, 2019 • Georgia State Capitol, Atlanta, GA



*Augusta University students with
GANA lobbyist Monty Veazey and State Senator Matt Brass*



Augusta University SRNAs



*CRNAs and SRNAs from Augusta University
meeting with Speaker Pro Tem Jan Jones*



The Emory SRNAs with State Representative Roger Bruce



The Emory SRNAs met with Secretary of State Brad Raffensperger

To&Fro

Georgia Association of Nurse Anesthetists
222 South Prospect Avenue
Park Ridge, IL 60068-4037

FIRST CLASS
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit 466
SUWANEE, GA

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

<<FirstName>> <<LastName>>
<<HomeAddressLine1>>
<<HomeCity>>, <<HomeState>>
<<HomeZipCode>>

**Georgia
Association of
Nurse
Anesthetists
PAC**

*I am contributing \$ _____ to further
the legislative efforts of the GANA.*

*Thank you for
your contribution
to this worthy
cause for your
profession!*

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone # _____ Best time to call _____

Email _____ Fax _____

Do you work in ☐ an office based setting? ☐ a rural hospital? ☐ a surgery center? ☐ an urban hospital?

Nurse Practitioner _____ Other (specify) _____ (Mandatory for all donations greater than \$100)

Are you interested in lobbying with the GANA during the legislative session? _____

Are you acquainted with any of Georgia's legislators? _____ If yes, who? _____

Please clip and send to: **Krystal Toledo, GANA-PAC Treasurer, P.O. Box 887, Tifton, GA 31793**

Forms available at www.gana.org

